

PRELIMINARY CHECKLIST OF COPEPODA : HARPACTICOIDA IN WESTERN SARAWAK WATERS

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ABSTRACT

The aim of the present study was to establish a preliminary checklist of the harpacticoid copepods species in Sarawak waters. The harpacticoid copepods sampling had been carried out along coastal waters of the western part of Sarawak. A total of 20 families, 42 genera and 66 species were recorded during the present study. The change in the particle size composition of sediments in coastal intertidal area of the western part of Sarawak seems to affect the species distribution of harpacticoid copepods.

INTRODUCTION

Copepods are aquatic crustaceans, the diminutive relatives of the crabs and shrimps (Huys and Boxshall, 1991). They noted that over 10,000 species are currently known but, since the true diversity of the benthic harpacticoids and of the poecilostomatoid and siphonostomatoid associates of marine invertebrates, has yet to be revealed, this number could easily double by the middle of the twenty first century. The suborder Harpacticoida, one of ten orders of the subclass Copepoda contains approximately 1,500 species of which about 85% are marine and ranging in size from 0.2 to 2.5 mm (Coull, 1977; Huys and Boxshall, 1991). The other nine orders of Copepoda are Platycopioidea, Calanoida, Misophrioida, Monstrilloidea, Mormonilloidea, Gelyelloidea, Cyclopoida, Siphonostomatoida and Poecilostomatoida (Huys and Boxshall, 1991).